

Joint Education Committee Public Hearing 3.4.2022
RE: HB 5283- An Act Concerning The Education Cost Sharing Grant Formula and The
Funding of Other Education Programs

Dear Co-Chairs Rep. Sanchez and Senator McCrory, Vice-Chairs Rep. Barry and Senator Daugherty Abrams, Ranking Members Rep. McCarty and Senator Berthel, and members of the Education Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony *in support of* HB 5283- An Act Concerning The Education Cost Sharing Grant Formula and The Funding of Other Education Programs.

My name is Kip Kolesinskas, and I am a member of the Consulting Committee for the Vernon Regional Agricultural Science and Technology Education Program. In addition, I am also a Consulting Conservation Scientist working at the national, regional, and state levels on climate change, natural resources protection, and sustainable food systems.

As a Consulting Committee member of a “sending” Town, I have been impressed with the quality of the education the students receive. I am also aware that the current funding and formulas have put the program at a disadvantage by creating financial burdens for sending towns (which has been a barrier to enrollment), and reducing the ability of Vernon’s program to afford the best equipment, materials, and infrastructure need for supporting science and technology rich education. This Bill should address some of these issues.

As conservation professional I understand the considerable challenges before us; feeding 10 billion people by 2050, mitigating and addressing climate change, addressing pollution and environmental and food justice. The Nation’s AgriScience Programs are essential to bringing the knowledge and skills to the next generation of adults, while harnessing the creativity and enthusiasm of our youth. CT’s AgriScience Programs can do this very well if we provide the needed support. Although I did not attend a high school AgriScience program, I can attest to the excellent educational background and life skills (such as public speaking) that those attending the Vernon Regional ASTE Program receive. They are well prepared for higher education, Trade Programs, or going directly into the workforce as our farmers, technicians, mechanics, landscapers, and other valuable positions and businesses.

Please pass HB 5283 and guarantee sufficient funding and parity for the future of CT’s AgriScience Programs. Our future depends on the success of their students! Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kipen J. Kolesinskas

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Manchester, CT